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A SIAMESE PAGEANT.

By DAVID KER.

THE two great festivals of the Siamese year—the White Elephant's birthday having not yet taken rank there as a Bank holiday—are the birthday of the reigning king, and His Majesty's visit in state to the chief local temples towards the end of autumn. I say 'the king' advisedly, for there is now but one, the office of 'Second King' having recently been abolished on the occasion of the late incumbent's death. This may perhaps be a change for the better, for the duplicate kingship produced at times some rather awkward complications, as in the case of a quarrel between the two monarchs, not many years ago, when the Second King rushed down to the English Consulate and put himself under British protection against the First King; while the First King locked himself up in his bedroom for a week for fear of being murdered by the Second King.

Our stay in Bangkok—which has superseded Siam's ancient inland metropolis, Ayuthia, as St Petersburg superseded Moscow—included both the great national holidays. In September came the birthday of 'the Golden-footed Prince and Lord of the White Elephant,' Prabaht Sombetch Phra Paramendr Maha Chulalongkorn Klow—may his life be as long as his name!—and a few weeks later followed the 'Visiting of the Temples.'

The birthday celebration was very well worth seeing, though some of its ceremonies were copied too closely from those of European courts not to appear somewhat incongruous in so thoroughly Asiatic a city. It was certainly no joke for us unfortunate Europeans to swelter beneath a tropical sun in full-dress suits of black broad-cloth, while waiting to offer our congratulations to the king. It fared even worse with the poor Siamese princes and nobles in their cumbersome dresses of coloured silk, stiff with gold embroidery; that worn by Prince Bhaskarawongse—which he afterwards showed me when I visited

his house—being so heavy that I could barely lift it with one hand.

But the great procession that followed a little later was picturesque enough to have atoned for much more serious hardships. Through the vast paved court-yard of the palace—above which its three successive roofs towered in one great blaze of green and gold—came, marching, to the music of a well-trained military band, a picked body of grenadiers in the uniform of the Siamese line—white frocks and sun-helmets, and blue trousers with a white stripe down the side. Then followed the scarlet jackets, and red horsehair plumes, and fine black horses of the cavalry of the Guard, succeeded by the Foot Guards in dark-blue coats, armed with English rifles. Behind these came the crew of the king's model yacht—about a score of bright young native sailor-lads, who looked very smart and 'ship-shape' in their British man-o'-war jackets. To them succeeded—as my English host observed with a grin—a regiment of genuine *infantry*—that is, several dozen tiny Siamese children, dressed as Highland soldiers—to our no small surprise—in the gay tartan of the Clan Stewart, which set off their solemn little brown faces very picturesquely.

And now a fresh burst of music heralded the arrival of the native grantees, carried by white-robed slaves in carved chairs of ivory or inlaid wood, under the shade of huge many-coloured umbrellas, which reminded us of those that we had seen overshadowing the black royalties of West Africa. Then followed the king's brothers, beneath still larger umbrellas fringed with gold; and finally—with a swarm of richly-dressed attendants before and around him, carrying bundles of rattans across the palms of their outstretched hands—appeared the king himself—a slim, rather good-looking young man of thirty—accompanied by three of his children, among whom the four-year-old Crown-prince is conspicuous by the tiny crown of diamonds which encircles his little top-knot of fuzzy black hair.

Altogether, it was a famous show; and the only drawback to its barbaric splendour was the group

of uncouth creatures in bottle-shaped helmets that guard the outer gate, whose brown, ape-like forms, clad in faded scarlet jackets trimmed with tawdry gold lace, were irresistibly suggestive of an organ-grinder's monkey.

That night both banks of the Me-Nam (Mother of Waters), which forms the main thoroughfare of this amphibious capital, were profusely illuminated, the very ships having every line of their hulls and rigging traced against the darkness in living fire. Conspicuous amid the swarm of crowns, arches, towers, stars, &c. that hovered phantom-like in the dark air, figured a monster letter-box formed by countless tiny jets of fire—symbolising the postal service recently established by the king through the interior of Siam—around which a ring of shining letters wished 'Prosperity to the King and the Postal and Telegraph Union.' A girdle of stars encircled the vast tower of the Wat-Cheng (Elephant Temple) on the right bank; and the tall spear-pointed pagoda that sentinelled the royal mausoleum stood out in one great spire of quivering flame against the vast gulf of blackness, like the red-hot pinnacles of Dante's infernal city glaring through the sunless gloom of the nether world.

A month later came the second and more characteristic of the two great national pageants—the 'Visitation of the Temples' by the king and his court—and, early on the appointed morning, in order to make sure of having a full view of the day's proceedings, we established ourselves, by the advice of a veteran English resident, in the court-yard of the most celebrated temple of all—the far-famed Wat-Cheng.

This eldest and most stately of the great temples of Bangkok is now fast falling to decay, the whole lower part of it being little better than an absolute ruin; for in Siam, as in Burma, no one ever dreams of repairing anything; and when any building—house, temple, or palace—begins to crumble away, the custom is not to restore it, but to build another in its stead. The damp, slimy pavement of the weed-grown court-yard is heaped with the remains of shattered cornices and fallen pillars; and stones, dust, and rubbish have choked up not a few of the small, gloomy cells that form a kind of cloister around the four sides of the quadrangle, which, once tenanted by yellow-robed Buddhist monks with shaven crowns, are now shared by toads and serpents, with gangs of native thieves.

Through one of the countless clefts in these mouldering walls struggles a stray gleam of sunshine, glimmering faintly upon the gilded fragments of the sacred images of Buddha, one of which has a somewhat curious history. Between two blocks of stone in the niche where it used to stand may still be seen a narrow opening, not unlike the slit of a letter-box, into which once fell the offerings dropped through the mouth of the idol by the rich, and subsequently taken

out from behind by the poor, in the belief that the holy image itself sent them the money. But in process of time, when the temple began to decay and to be deserted by its richer worshippers, the contributions gradually ceased; and then the poorer folk, finding that their idol had suspended the payment of his periodical dividends, avenged his remissness by breaking him in pieces on the spot.

This abode of desolation, however, has still some inhabitants of its own, of a very appropriate kind. As you pick your way amid the heaps of ruin, grim-looking warriors start up before you with brandished weapons, and hideous monsters threaten you with greedy fangs and uplifted paws. But no sound issues from the gaping jaws—the ponderous clubs never fall, the menacing claws never strike; all are of cold, hard stone, like the spell-bound guardians of some enchanted palace, awaiting the destined champion whose coming shall arouse them from the torpor of ages.

When you stand at the foot of the great pagoda itself, you seem to be looking up at a mountain of living rainbows, flashing and quivering incessantly like falling water; and it requires some time to grasp all the details of this singular structure, seemingly so magnificent, but really so mean and poor. Around the central tower stand ranged like a life-guard four massive pagodas of the bell-shaped pattern, so universal both in Burma and Siam, each ascended by a steep narrow stair, and all four inlaid with coloured porcelain, while above them a mighty pinnacle springs up into the sky like an embodied prayer, to a height of more than two hundred feet.

At the first glance the blaze of many-coloured splendour that lights up this tower from base to summit might lead one to suppose it thickly set with precious stones, or at least inlaid with the costliest porcelain. But the admiring spectator is grievously disillusioned when he comes nearer to it, and sees that this show of glittering magnificence is produced merely by countless fragments of common earthenware plates dabbed into a thick coating of stucco, like almonds in hard-bake!

Between the sentinel towers, the pyramidal sides of the structure slope upward in one great mass of sculptured archways, painted crockets, carved cornices, and scale-shaped tiles of green and gold, rising terrace above terrace, without order and without end. Ever and anon start up weirdly through this wilderness of gorgeous hues a long line of goblin forms in many-coloured robes and pointed caps, whose uplifted arms seem to support the projecting cornice overhead—intended to represent angels, though their black, misshapen visages and huge tusks make them look more like devils.

In the court-yard of this strange place we posted ourselves on the appointed day, to await the coming of the king and his suite. We had no lack of company, for the whole enclosure, so voiceless and deserted at other times, was now full to overflowing. White-froked slaves; hel-

meted soldiers; doll-faced Chinamen in huge straw hats; blue-coated Guardsmen; stunted, greasy market-women with hair cropped as short as the bristles of a scrubbing-brush; bare-limbed peasants from the rice-swamps, whose dark skin was covered as with a blue gauze veil by the elaborate tattooing which their superstition believed to be a sure charm against all weapons; and children in the native full-dress of a string of beads round the neck and a brass ring on each wrist—eddlid around us like a sea.

Thanks to the kindness of the Siamese Cabinet Ministers, room had been made for our party—which included the British Consul and the American ambassador, General H—, on a raised stone platform occupied by themselves, close to the spot where the king was to land; and from this point of vantage we beheld not a few spectacles which, however common in this strange region, would be abundantly startling anywhere else.

Just in front of us halted a native boat, one of the crew of which, while rowing, had held between his toes the 'buri' or native cigar that he had just been smoking, formed of a huge reed stuffed with tobacco. In an open space a little to the rear of the seething crowd around us, a group of supple, slender-limbed native children, with nothing on but a wreath of flowers around their solitary 'head-tuft' of bristly black hair—the cutting of which is to a Siamese boy what the putting on of his first tail-coat is to an English one—were playing a kind of Orientalised lawn-tennis with a ball of palm-pith, which they struck to and fro, not with their hands, but with their feet, using the sole and the instep with equal ease.

A little farther on, a small Siamese cottage of plank and shingle was coming gravely up the river by itself, steered with a huge clumsy oar by its proprietor, who stood on the wooden stair in front of the door with his children around him. One of these—a little mite barely old enough to walk alone—suddenly tumbled overboard, but, apparently not a whit discomposed, coolly swam after his locomotive home, and scrambled up again to the side of his philosophic father, who seemed as little disturbed by this incident as the hero of it himself.

But all at once a buzz of excitement through the crowd, and a general turning of heads up the river toward the palace, warned us that the 'Procession of Barges'—the great show of the day—was just coming in sight. And a gallant sight it was. The king's state barge, which headed the procession, was one blaze of bright paint and gilding throughout its entire length, which was very considerable, for it was rowed by a hundred men, all as gorgeous as tropical butterflies in their uniform of scarlet and blue, which are the royal colours of Siam. Bow and stern alike were one mass of gilding, and twisted into fantastic curves, which glittering in the cloudless sun, might well have been mistaken for the coils of a monstrous snake; and over the stern hung, by way of ornament, the tail of a 'yâk,' the famous 'grunting ox' of Tibet. Near the bow stood a richly dressed personage, who seemed to act as boatswain, and regulated the movements of the oarsmen by thumping against the planks upon which he stood the end of a long bamboo which he held in his

right hand; and just behind him was planted a small cannon, as if to shoot him in case he neglected his duty. After every stroke, all the hundred rowers shot their broad-bladed oars into the air at once, with a sudden jerk, the effect of which—all the oars being profusely gilded—was like that of a flash of lightning.

Just amidships, beneath a small open-sided pavilion loaded with barbaric ornaments, sat the young king himself, with the pagoda-shaped crown of Siam upon his head. This crown is only worn once in three years, which is just as well for the unfortunate wearer, its weight being fully thirty-six pounds English; and were it to fall off, there is no saying what might be the consequence, only one official in the whole realm being empowered to touch the crown, which even the king himself must not do. In fact, the dilemma is the same as that of the luckless king of Spain who was burned to death because the proper officer was not at hand to put him out. Following the king came the boats of the various princes and nobles, similarly decorated, the crews being as gay as a flower-show in their dresses of bright yellow, green, blue, or crimson, to which the dazzling sunshine did full justice. But one and all kept at a respectful distance from the king's barge, it being ordained by law that the crew of any boat daring to run against that which carries the person of Siamese royalty, shall all be beheaded on the spot; and though this humane statute has lately fallen into disuse, the native boatmen had evidently a wholesome fear of seeing it suddenly revived for their especial benefit.

On landing from his barge, the king was borne into the court-yard of the ancient temple upon a kind of litter; but the same distinction was not extended to all his numerous brothers, three or four of whom—strapping lads of fifteen or sixteen—were carried like babies in the arms of their native attendants, with their bare brown limbs dangling down in a queer, helpless fashion that recalled to me how I had once seen the august governor of an African colony dragged out of the surf on to the beach, with his feet higher than his head, by the black hands of three or four stalwart negroes.

As the Lord of the White Elephant went past, the native spectators, to a man, went down on their hands and knees and bowed their faces to the very dust; and at the same instant I myself performed an equally low prostration without intending it. One of the Siamese Ministers—a corpulent old fellow with a broad, heavy, good-humoured face—had just offered me a light open-work iron chair recently imported from Paris, which shut up like a penknife the moment I sat down upon it, and sent me rolling in the dust, to the immeasurable delight of the bystanders. The only thing to be done was to get up again and join in the laugh; but hardly had I done so, when down went the old Minister himself in turn, in precisely the same fashion, and lay sprawling on his back in the dirt, his great bulk and weight making it no easy matter for him to rise again.

How much of this absurd scene the king had witnessed, I cannot tell; but I afterwards learned that he had singled out my wife and myself as new faces in the Ministerial circle—for he was already familiar with those of the Consul and the General—and had asked one of his courtiers who

we were. The latter answered—there being naturally no Siamese equivalent for ‘newspaper correspondents’—that we were ‘people who made marks on paper’—a not inapt definition of a good many authors of the present day.

POMONA.*

CHAPTER VII.

Henceforth my name has been
A hallow'd memory like the names of old,
A center'd, glory-circled memory,
And a peculiar treasure brooking no
Exchange or currency.

TENNYSON.

‘I THINK,’ Owen Ludlow said to himself a fortnight later, contemplating his picture with a strange mixture of irritation and amusement, ‘that something fresh has been imported into this, besides the recognition in the girl’s eyes. It really is hard lines on a fellow to have the whole intention of his work altered in spite of himself, without either with your leave or by your leave; and it’s not quite fair on the story which the picture is meant to illustrate. There is not the slightest hint in the mythological dictionaries of any other girl looking at Vertumnus with eyes like that. Recognition indeed! it might have been so a fortnight ago; it means a good deal more now; and it upsets the balance of my picture too, for I don’t believe, if Vertumnus had looked away from Pomona for a moment, he would not have been fascinated by those sweet eyes. I think I have made Pomona a shade too unconscious of Vertumnus. I don’t believe, beautiful as she is, that in real life such sublime unconsciousness would have had a chance against the feeling in the other’s eyes. Those are unconscious, too, of their own meaning, but vividly conscious of him. Pshaw! Why can’t I paint as I please? a touch here, a shadow there; and surely one can alter the expression to anything one pleases; but try my hardest, I can’t fetch that look out of the girl’s face in the picture, any more than I could in real life.’

And here the painter left off contemplating his own picture, to look at another that he could see through the middle window of the large bow, the apple-tree without the fair figure of Pomona, but with Vertumnus smiling down at Sage as he dropped the rosy apples he was gathering from the boughs over her head, into her skirt, held to receive them.

Sage had given a little sigh to herself that first evening of Maurice Moore’s arrival; for she thought that Owen Ludlow would no longer care for her company, and the sittings would most likely be discontinued. But Owen would not hear of such a thing; nor, when she came, would he let Maurice slope off along the cliff with his pipe and a novel, as he once or twice made a very mild feint of doing, to leave the sittings undisturbed; and often the painter would cut short the sitting, and propose that they should all adjourn to some favourite haunt of his on cliff or shore; or that Sage should show Maurice the way across the cliffs, or scramble with him across the rocks at low tide to some little bay or cluster of fishermen’s cottages.

Altogether, I don’t think Owen Ludlow need

have been so much surprised at that look in Sage’s face, for if he had been the most designing, match-making mother in society, and Maurice had been the biggest catch in the matrimonial market, and Sage one of six daughters awaiting promotion, he could hardly have thrown them together more artfully. One would have thought that fifty years’ experience of life might have taught him what to expect when a young girl was constantly in the company of such a good-looking, agreeable, young fellow as Maurice Moore; and perhaps if there had been a mixture of the tenderer feeling in Owen’s friendship for Sage—and, in passing, I must protest against my own use of the word ‘tender’ as applied specially to love, seeing that friendship is often far tenderer—he would have been more alive to the danger, jealousy being keener eyed and more nearly allied to love than to friendship. But how could he have foreseen, he protested to himself, that Maurice would have looked twice at such a quiet, little thing as Sage, in her shabby serge frock, with her simple shy manners, when he was used to fashionable society, and was continually brought in contact with beautiful and elegant women? Why, ten years ago in California, when he was little more than a boy, he had had more love affairs than Ludlow had thought possible in the course of an ordinary lifetime; and since then, every time he and Ludlow had met there had been some affair of the heart more or less serious, generally less, to relate.

But who would have thought that he would have noticed little Sage? whom Ludlow, fond as he was of her, had never till now thought at all pretty, and who indeed was not so. But now Sage seemed suddenly endowed with something curiously like beauty, whether from the new expression in her face, or from Ludlow seeing her with Maurice’s eyes, as one so often sees people and places from another person’s point of view, sometimes getting sudden new revelations in this way about faces or scenes one has known for years with a very different impression.

He, certainly—and Maurice told him so plainly—had not done her justice in the picture, and this went to prove that it was not the new expression alone that had beautified her, for that had found its way, against the painter’s will, into the picture.

Well, anyhow, the painter told himself, it would soon come to an end. Maurice would have to leave in two days, and the boys’ holidays were nearly over; and Sage would go back to London to the old life of ordering dinner and mending the boys’ socks, and this would be only a pleasant, bright memory, with Maurice Moore a picturesque figure in the foreground.

It was no use turning crusty now, and making himself disagreeable and spoiling sport for these two last days, and yet that look in Sage’s eyes in the picture and in reality made him uneasy, as meaning something more than being ‘the summer pilot of an empty heart unto the shores of nothing,’ and as showing great possibilities of happiness or heartbreak as circumstances might dictate.

But he was not left long to his reflections that afternoon, for his studio was invaded by a company armed with crooked sticks and baskets and a black kettle of noble proportions, for all the world was going blackberrying to the Landslip,

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Mrs Rockett having undertaken to make as much jam as they could find blackberries and jars to contain it.

The Landslip is about three miles along the coast from Scar, where some years ago a large piece of the cliff fell in the night, leaving a great chasm, with rocks and masses of earth heaped up anyhow in very chaotic fashion, which nature, year after year, in her gentle, kindly manner, was trying to restore to order, clothing the torn, rugged blocks with lichen and tufts of fern and trails of ivy, carpeting the hollows with moss, filling up nooks with the stinking iris, which is pretty enough to deserve a prettier name, though I am bound to confess it also merits that one, and which just now was beginning to split its seed-vessels and show the coral berries inside. Some of the trees had come down in the slip from the level of the cliff above, and must have felt sadly shaken, and are in queer positions with twisted trunks, straining to get back to the perpendicular, and over these, and over the young growth of beech and ash saplings and nut-bushes, has been thrown a tangle of rose branches and brambles and clematis, the last enacting the part of old-man's-beard now, instead of the fragrant traveller's joy of the summer.

Here and there, out of the thick undergrowth, rose rocky islands, which had resisted the general downfall, and reared up rough, rugged blocks, as if in defiance of the smoothing influence of nature; and on one of these Ludlow took his seat when his blackberrying ardour had abated, which soon happens at fifty. Sitting up there, he looked, Maurice said, like the cormorant on the tree of knowledge in the garden of Eden, or the little cherub perched up aloft; and from that elevated position he could command the length and breadth of the defile caused by the landslip, and could catch occasional glimpses of the rest of the party among the bushes, or in the little oases of open space, and could hear the boys shouting to one another.

'Oh, I say, come here! here's a jolly lot!'

'Hullo there, Dennis, where have you got to?'

'Kitty, Kitty, come on, can't you?'

Shouts that gradually grew fainter as they went farther down the Landslip.

That idea of the cormorant had naturally suggested to Ludlow's mind that first pair of lovers in Eden; and a glimpse of Maurice and Sage as they passed down a little glade together, fitted in so well with the rest of the picture, that he smiled to himself in half-irritated amusement. They did not seem to be doing much blackberry-gathering. Maurice used his crooked stick to clear the branches out of Sage's path; and sometimes they stood for a few minutes under a bush, which I am sure Kitty or the boys would have gathered a harvest from, and strayed on again without adding one to the very modest heap in Sage's basket.

It was all so new to Sage; the ordinary courtesy of a young man to a girl was as yet quite an unknown thing to her; not that Dr Merridew would ever allow the boys to be rude to her; and he himself treated her with an old-fashioned, chivalrous respect; but the treatment most girls are used to in society, being waited upon and

taken care of, Sage had no experience of; and even Owen Ludlow's treatment had not quite the same flavour.

The situation had not the same novelty to Maurice. As I have said before, he had had many affairs of the heart, and, I am afraid, had often and often gone much further than he did to-day with Sage in the Landslip without the heart being concerned in the affair at all; but there was a charm in little Sage, with this new evanescent beauty about her which love confers; and there was a sort of fitness and tranquil appropriateness about her surroundings that took his fancy and pleased his taste; and fancy and taste make up a large part of many men's hearts, and of some women's, and with them you have to cut down deep through the white sugar and almond paste before you come to the cake itself; and many people think the almond paste the best part of the business.

'Hullo! Hullo! Hullo!' The cormorant on the tree of knowledge is summoning his widely scattered party for tea.

'Tea-time!' Sage exclaims.—'Why! we were not to have tea till five.'

'And now it is half-past,' says Maurice, looking at his watch.

They could hardly believe two whole hours had passed since they reached the Landslip; and they looked a little shamefacedly at their basket, which hardly contained enough blackberries to conceal the bottom.

'We must have upset the basket getting through those bushes,' Sage said.

'Or, perhaps,' he suggested, 'the boys have been along and picked all the blackberries.'

There must be something to account for the emptiness of the basket.

'Coo-ee! Coo-ee!' The painter's sonorous voice rings out, and is echoed among the rocks, and brings back an answering shout from far-away Dennis and Nigel and Will; and a shrill little 'Coo-ee' from Kitty, nearer home.

They have all much farther to come back than Sage and Maurice; and yet, when these two loiterers arrive at the great flat slab of stone on which the fire has been built up, they find all the others collected, and a brisk fire burning under the kettle, hung in gypsy fashion on sticks over the blaze. Gypsy teas have been so numerous since they came to Scar, that the children are all quite equal to the occasion, and none of the catastrophes happen that used to be so frequent at first—important articles such as matches forgotten, damp wood, upset kettle, smoky water, and ant-hills chosen for seats. To-day, the spot chosen was most judicious, as the smoke curled away up between two upright stones that formed a natural chimney, and did not come straight in the faces of the party, as often happened.

Sage had arrived too late on the scene to undertake her usual office of unpacking the baskets and making the tea, as the boys had undertaken the former duty with great bustling; and Kitty was presiding over the teapot with much importance, and resentment at any interference.

So Maurice found Sage a seat among the mossy stones, where she sat at ease. She had taken off her hat; and her head with its soft plaits, from which little rings escaped wherever they got the

chance, was resting back on a cushion of moss. There was a little colour in her usually pale cheeks, and a soft radiant light in her eyes, and such a look of great content when Maurice settled himself at her feet, that Ludlow's uneasy feelings revived, and his attention was so distracted that he let the kettle boil over and scalded his finger. He cast such wrathful glances at Maurice, that that young reprobate, out of mischief, threw still greater *empressment* into his manner to the girl, and looked up at her with more sentiment in his dark eyes, and sank his voice to a softer, more confidential tone, so that the painter could not hear the words, which were matter-of-fact enough, but only the tone, which was lover-like.

September days are short, so the sun was setting before tea was done, glorifying the whole place with crimson light, shooting shafts of liquid gold between tree-trunks, bringing out wonderful tints, deepening blue shadows, sharpening outlines, and, overhead, sprinkling the sky with little pink butterfly clouds, turning golden as they neared the west. It was one of those exceptionally beautiful sunsets that come now and then to make us look up from the mud and above the brick walls which bound our view in ordinary life.

Ludlow's attention was distracted from his displeasure with Maurice, and Maurice ceased to wish to aggravate Ludlow; the children left off wrangling over their blackberries, and even the boys sat with their knees drawn up to their chins, staring at the gorgeous panoply; and Sage, leaning back luxuriously on her mossy cushion, felt that the loveliness was almost more than she could bear; but with her, poor child, I think anything seen as that was, over Maurice Moore's dark head, would have seemed beautiful, and life a dream of happiness, with him sitting at her feet.

When the spell was broken at last, when the boys jumped to their feet, clattering plates and cups in preparation for packing, and the painter stretched himself and said they ought to be getting under way, and Maurice got up and began rolling a cigarette, Sage drew her breath sharply with almost a sob in it, as if she had been drinking in the beauty breathlessly. If every one would have sat still, if Nigel had not suddenly flung up his heels in the air, and Will tried to balance a saucer on his nose, it seemed to her as if those ecstatic moments of sunset might have been prolonged indefinitely; but the stir seemed to end it; the sun dipped petulantly behind a cloud, and immediately the colours began to die and deaden, and the shadows grow ashen and dull; and a mist became apparent, rising from the bottom of the Landlip where the irises grew.

'We are going home over the cliffs,' Kitty said, taking possession of the painter's arm; 'and you are going to tell us all about that prairie fire from the very beginning.'

So Ludlow, who had meant to act the dragon on the way home, and keep Sage tucked under his arm, was marched off with Kitty on one side and Nigel on the other, and Dennis and Will circling round, or walking backwards in front of him.

So Ludlow had to resign himself to circumstances, and presently got so interested in his

story, that he did not think of Sage and Maurice till he reached the path leading down into Scar, when he became conscious they were far away behind, only dimly to be made out in the moonlight on the cliff.

There was some excuse for loitering on such a night, with that broad rippling silver band drawn across the dark sea, and the great, gentle moon beaming down at them, with a soft bright star to share her solitude in the quiet blue vault. From the shore below, the wash of the waves on the beach hardly broke the silence, which was so deep that they could hear the sheep cropping the short grass on the cliff behind them.

Maurice had been helping Sage to climb a steep little bit of the path—Sage, who had never been helped over any rough or steep bits of life before, having generally to drag or push some one else through difficulties—and he did not leave go of her hand when the steep part was passed, but kept it in his, and held it still as they stood looking at the moonlit sea.

He was telling her, with a regret in his tone that was infinitely sweet to her ear, though his words themselves were of the parting that made her heart sink, of his going away to the noisy, restless, society life, to the pretence and push and unreality, to the heart-burnings and jealousies, to the petty spite and paltry ambitions. He spoke of it all with such contempt and weariness, that no one could have imagined, least of all that most credulous listener whose little hand thrilled in his, that he had found this life very endurable a few weeks ago, and most probably would return to it without too great repugnance before many days were over. But he really did mean it at the time very heartily, quite as much, and perhaps more than he had meant many another tender little sentiment or softly murmured compliment in other equally romantic situations as this on the quiet cliff, with the great stretch of sea, 'that moving seems to sleep,' before them, with the broad silver stripe of moonlight across it.

So also he meant it entirely when he bent nearer to her and clasped her hand more tenderly and said: 'I shall never forget this happy time at Scar. It has been the happiest fortnight of my life.—Sage, will you forget me quite when I am gone?'

He had never called her Sage before; and from that moment the name was altered to her, sweetened, glorified, so that she could never hear it from the most indifferent lips, or write it in the most commonplace business of life, without feeling a little thrill of pleasure.

She did not answer his question. How could she, with her heart beating in such great happy throbs? But perhaps it did not want great self-assurance or conceit on Maurice's part to guess what the answer would have been, from the tremble of the hand in his, and the eloquent silence of the small face so fair in the moonlight.

After all, what had he said, and what had he done to feel any compunction about? he asked himself with irritation when he had parted from her at the cottage door, when the children's noisy narrative of the events of the day to Mrs Rockett, and display of the blackberries they had amassed, cut short the parting, and made it too public for

tenderness. It was only that he had meant it a little more, and she had believed it a little more than had happened on other occasions, when he had had a turn at that fascinating sport of fencing which we call flirtation, a charming diversion, elegant and amusing, and no harm in it, thrust and parry, point and tierce. But have a care! All of a sudden the button is off the foil; the game is turned into deadly earnest, the elegant diversion ends with a death-wound.

'Pshaw!' he said, impatiently, 'where's the harm?'

And yet, as he came into the studio, where the painter sat smoking, with a book in his hand, he felt unaccountably ashamed, and inclined to be apologetic.

THE BIRTH OF THE MECHANICAL POWERS.

THE tendency of modern research is to establish the proposition that human society is an organism which has grown to a complex form out of simple beginnings. It is difficult for the trained intellect of to-day to form a mental picture of the untrained intelligence of the earliest men, and the language in which we express that primary mental condition does not convey exact notions to the mind. It is harder to imagine than to describe a mind with no logical thought, and no knowledge of natural facts, still harder to conceive with what slowness any progress ever took place. Yet, as we travel back upon the historic past into the region of pre-history, we at length encounter men around whom and in whom there played physical forces of which they had no comprehension. Logical inference supports written tradition in saying that the remotest men had to start in life with no stock in trade but a group of faculties which as yet were wholly undeveloped.

These earliest men found themselves environed by the facts of life; and it was the observation, not only of natural events, but of the ways of other sentient beings, and themselves, which first taught them the rudiments of mechanics. There is a fable which, like most, has a philosophic basis, that men first learned the art of swimming by watching the instinctive actions of a young frog. A popular writer published some years ago a collection of instances in which human inventions were anticipated by the blind instinct of beasts or herbs, and has shown, for example, that the aquatic plant known as *Utricularia* applied the principle of the crab-pot ages before ever an archaic fisherman caught crabs by that means. And there is no doubt that in many cases the slow, half-intelligent perception of the methods adopted in Nature for achieving mechanical results was one chief source of instruction for the earliest engineers.

The axiom that example is better than precept is one which has exerted an immense influence upon social evolution, and that influence made itself felt in two ways. Some particular man would happen to do a certain thing, probably by accident, and others who noticed it would be at once filled with the desire to imitate it. In certain French watering-places, three or four years ago, there arose a fashion amongst the women of

wearing gloves of different colours—for instance, a black glove on the right hand and a white glove on the left. This practice owed its birth to the fact that at a certain concert early in the year a leader of fashion appeared in the room wearing odd gloves in this way. She had put them on unconsciously, and was horrified when she discovered her blunder; but the other women present at once imagined that this was the new *mode*, and it was instantly adopted. In ways just as accidental, individuals who had acquired a reputation for special wisdom or aptitude would in early societies become at once objects of minute imitation.

All mechanical labour must in the nature of things start from the foundation afforded by the human hand. But men would live in the world a very short time before beginning to see that many mechanical enterprises required a greater hand-power than that of a single man. The inference suggested by a study of the human remains of the glacial drift is that, from the very first, men turned themselves into a sort of compound machine by pulling together. Two facts conspired to impart to this act a peculiar development. The innate distaste of men to use their own hands on the one side, and the need for disposing of prisoners taken in war on the other, would, in an age of physical struggle, when one race could hope to exist only by effacing another, lead conquering tribes to utilise the accumulated energy of living captive men. In this sense it may be said that the first machine ever invented was a slave-gang, and the first engineer its taskmaster.

But besides the energy obtained from men, early engineers were not slow to utilise the power stored up in other animals. There is evidence that even in the palæolithic age the art of domesticating animals was already in vogue; and one of the earliest scratched bones extant—the remote precursor of all pictorial art—represents a man in the act of guiding a rude lopped pole, drawn by a horse, as a sort of primitive plough. The fact that in the Danish 'kitchen-middens,' or rubbish-heaps, all the marrow bones are found to be split and gnawed, is regarded as proof of the existence at that time of a breed of domestic dogs. The ass, also, as far back as Semitic traditions go, was a beast of burden in Western Asia. When it is remembered that the ass is regarded as capable of five times the work that can be done by a man, and that the horse is ten times as powerful as a man, it will at once be perceived that the adoption of these animals as prime movers would add immensely to the mechanical capabilities of early engineers.

The precise relative date at which water-power first came into use cannot be asserted. Amongst the remains of the Stone Age, from the earliest to those which, from their superior finish and more perfect adaptation, are thought to be later in point of time, there is no class more frequent than that of mortars and pestles. Sandstone blocks, or querns, bearing hollows which have about them the aspect of having been formed by the pounding of corn upon them, have been often found, and the whole inference is supported by other considerations that during the age of Stone the water-wheel as an agent for grinding corn

was not yet invented. The utilisation of human energy involved in the grinding of corn by hand was in fact replaced by that of quadrupeds long before horse and bullock power gave way to water-power. Cattle-mills, for instance, were in use amongst the Romans at an early date. It is difficult to suppose that the first inventors of the water-wheel used it for any purpose other than grinding, and the inference is that mills driven by this power were of relatively late origin. There is reason to believe that the Egyptians had water-wheels in use in very early times; and one is known to have been erected on the Tiber in the century before Christ. The first water-mill known in history is that described in connection with the Mithridatic wars. The tide-wheel is of quite recent origin, none being recorded earlier than those used by the Venetians in 1078 A.D.

Windmills, also, were not known in Europe before the twelfth century, but are believed to have been in use in the East before this time. A sawmill is recorded to have been in use in Augsburg in 1332. The fact that of all modern African races not one has ever hit upon either water-power or wind-power seems to prove that they involve a knowledge of advanced kinematics not attained by any races out of the track of the early civilisations.

Although the property of rubbed amber was perceived by Thales as early as the seventh century before Christ, yet it need scarcely be said that heat and electricity, as practical prime movers, are developments of the past two hundred years.

Let us now examine one by one, in the order of their birth, the mechanical powers which are described as the simple machines. Here it may be observed that whereas some of the lower animals do possess a knowledge of individual powers, yet, if those particular powers fail, they are incapable of carrying out their desires by other means. Monkeys, for instance, fetch themselves cocoa-nuts and break them open at the same time by running up the palm-trunks and dropping the nuts to the ground. But if a nut should fall intact, the monkey would not have the cleverness to pick up a stone and break it; nor has it the aptitude to throw a stone upwards, and so bring the nut to the ground. Both these actions would imply the pre-requisite of an opposable thumb. Similarly, a beaver will drag a tree-trunk to the river-side, that it may be built into the beaver-dam; but if the trunk be too heavy, it will not have the power to put one trunk on another, and so roll the trunk along.

It is in this capacity for inventiveness that the divergence of human aptitude from that of animals is to be found. Thus, there is no record of any brute creature ever deliberately and of set purpose transporting a weight from one point to another by rolling it down a hill. Yet the savage race does not exist which is incapable of this simple exercise of the inventive mind. Again, there is no record of a savage who would not be smart enough to drag one trunk over a smaller one, and so lessen the friction of transport. It may be taken for granted that the roller, in the form of a pole from which lateral branches had been lopped by cutting, breaking, or fire, was one of the earliest mechanical inven-

tions. It would not be long before men perceived that by reducing the bulk of the trunk in the middle, the power of the roller was increased, because friction was reduced, and in this way the middle part of the roller would at length develop into the axle, and its two ends into wheels. There is no evidence that trollies or carts of this rough pattern existed amongst the men of the Stone Age, and the theory that they had not yet been invented is strengthened by the fact that stone implements would have been incompetent to fashion a wheel. The earliest Chaldean monuments bear sculptured representations of rude wood-carts with two fixed wheels drawn by a single ox; but these very sculptures themselves prove that metallic tools were in use at the time.

The lever must be quite as old as the roller. When several felled poles lay together helter-skelter, one of them would most likely have one of its ends resting under another, and accidental depression of the free end would reveal the fact that heavy weights might be moved by pushing under them one end of a pole, and pushing under the pole another by way of fulcrum. The transport of heavy weights, therefore, might take place quite naturally amongst the men who preceded the metallic age by the use of poles as levers and rollers. At that stage nothing in the way of a crank or axle would have been known. The lever, like other powers, was of course known long before its properties had been investigated by the mathematician. It was, in fact, not until the time of Archimedes that the lever was explained.

It may be useful here to point out that in the pre-metallic age, before nails were possible, fastenings were effected by means of knots. The older stone implements are distinguished from those of the newer age by having been lashed to a wood-shaft with leather thongs; whereas, later on, men found out how much better it was to make a hole, either in the stone head or in the wooden handle. The fact that stone implements are found scattered singly here and there seems to suggest that they had slipped by accident out of the shafts through unskilful tying; and from this we may infer that the granny-knots and other unscientific methods of tying which children instinctively adopt are a relic of the Stone Age fastenings.

From the position in which their remains are found, it may be said that the Stone Age races of Western Europe obtained their supplies of fresh water from running streams and lakes. They would therefore have no knowledge of artificial wells, which seem to have been hit upon by Syrian nomads in very early times. At first, perhaps, vessels would be lowered by a thong, and then pulled up again; but if a pole were placed across the well-mouth for purposes of safety, men would at once see the advantage of pulling the rope against the pole. Later on, they would acquire the means of fixing the pole in the holes of vertical boards, and so the pulley would arise. Even before this invention, it is probable that men hit upon the plan, when dragging a heavy weight by means of a leather thong, of passing the thong round some handy tree.

The precise manner in which the wedge was invented cannot be shown. Perhaps some archaic

workman, hammering away at a block of wood with a flint knife, found the knife enter the wood and become fixed. In the effort to wrench it out, the block would split. This theory is strengthened by the fact that the invention of the axe and the wedge is ascribed to Dædalus. Such a belief on the part of the Greeks was but one way of saying that those implements had been handed down from a time which to them was one of remote antiquity; and the juxtaposition of the axe and wedge is a confirmation of the idea that both originated under one set of circumstances.

While the engineer of to-day is a being of a very different stamp from the engineer of the long-ago, the difference is one of degree rather than kind. Modern mechanical activity has shown itself not in the invention of new machines so much as in the application of new prime movers. The tendency of the time is to replace the prime movers of the early ages by others involving less human waste. The classic trireme was to all intents and purposes a ship propelled by a compound engine, whose cranks were human elbows, and whose pistons were human arms. A rower would not miss his stroke more frequently than the needle of a sewing-machine misses a stitch. But the comparative costliness of men as prime movers has been amply demonstrated by the calculation that, to do the same number of units of work as that produced by the motor of a Cunarder no fewer than a quarter of a million rowers would be required.

But enough has been said in these brief notes to show that, before the age of Iron, men had made considerable progress in mechanical invention, and it needed only the introduction of that metal to enable them to carry out the principles already known to gigantic issues.

THE BURDEN OF ISABEL.*

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—IN THE 'CORNER.'

THE interval till Monday, Suffield spent in peace. He did not think it was worth his while to waste his strength in travelling to London and back in that brief time, even to have the pleasure of seeing and taking counsel with his wife. On Sunday he went to church, and then in and out among his own people, cheering the young, and gossiping with and comforting the aged: he understood his own folk and their rudely affectionate ways better than he did those of the south country.

On Monday his anxiety and trouble began, which were to last till the month ended. He was the simple-minded, honest kind of man—as I have elsewhere remarked—who, when once he suspects, entertains an uncompromising distrust. He disliked and suspected Gorgonio, and therefore he believed it was impossible for Gorgonio, of his own motion, to deal honestly in any business. When he found, on visiting the Indian cotton in dock, that Gorgonio had spoken truth when he had said it was worth no more than twopence a pound, he merely thought it was one of those cases which frequently occur, when the habitual liar has not told a lie only because it was not

worth his while, and he distrusted Gorgonio the more for his having told the truth on one occasion. When Gorgonio asked what should be done with the cotton?—should it be warehoused and sold by parcels?—Suffield suspected him of some ulterior purpose—he would have found it difficult to say what—in making the suggestion.

'No,' said he. 'Sell the rubbish off at once. It's worth no more than twopence; and if we can get twopence for it, let us be thankful.'

But they did not get twopence for it. Twopence was very cheerfully given at first; but when still more was offered and more pressed upon the market 'without reserve,' buyers—a suspicious folk—began to think the cotton must really be worse than the samples indicated; so they refused to give twopence; and before the lot was cleared out a penny was reached. And Gorgonio laughed to himself—for he had secretly bought in a considerable quantity of it at a penny—and exclaimed: 'This is beautiful way to do business! The Suffiel' père is old fool!'

But Suffield was no fool: he was only consumed by dislike of the whole business, and distrust of Gorgonio. It worried and wore him beyond measure that the 'unloading' of 'corner' responsibilities must be entrusted to Gorgonio. It chafed him so much when he sat in his office that he had to get up and take the train to Liverpool 'to see how the Asiatic scamp was getting on.' He would even hang about among the busy crowd on the Liverpool flags—a very notable and half-forlorn-seeming figure—with a kind of watchful eye on Gorgonio; and in the troubled watches of the night he dreamed horribly of Gorgonio—who more and more looked as if he had been buried in some noisome place and, after some time, had been dug up again—of his hideous, pendulous, pitted nose, and his active pig's eyes.

And Gorgonio felt he was disliked and distrusted, and saw he was under such surveillance as the simple Suffield could bring to bear. Under no circumstances was Gorgonio a sweet-tempered and forgiving creature; but under these he became vindictive and reckless—reckless of his backer's interests, and reckless even in a measure of his own. By the following Monday, when prices were 'struck' for the week, not more than twenty thousand of the two hundred thousand bales of contracts had been got rid of; and prices had gone down, so that difference would have to be paid on one hundred and eighty thousand bales! On Tuesday afternoon, Gorgonio came to Suffield and set before him, with an ill-disguised satisfaction, the reckoning which would have to be met on Thursday, the 'settling day.' Mr Suffiel' must make out a cheque—to be paid into the cotton bank—for a considerable number of thousands!

'This must come to an end!' said Suffield, when he had made out the cheque. 'This repeated much would ruin any man!'

'How can any man make it end, Mr Suffiel'?' said Gorgonio. 'The more you sell out, the more will the prices go down!—down! It cannot help itself!'

So the days passed, and George did not return; and with waiting and worry his father began to look worn and aged: his hair turned gray, and his cheek lost its wholesome ruddiness. It added immensely to his trouble that, under George's

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rule, the interests of the Suffield business had been sacrificed to the demands of this extraneous speculation, and that proper business payments had been half-met or postponed, to permit of money being diverted to cotton transactions.

It was impossible that the change passing upon Suffield and the load of anxiety he bore—he was of those to whom concealment was well-nigh impossible—should not be observed in so well known and remarkable a figure as his. Speculation as to reasons became common. Where was his son?—shipped off because he had run the rig pretty freely? And why did he so frequently journey to Liverpool?—and appear—as was said—on ‘the Flugs?’ Men discussed these points as they saw him on ‘Change, as they sat at lunch over against him, and when he passed them in the streets. Whispers went round, and doubts began to gather: Was the house of Suffield becoming shaky? Was he there to stave off reverses brought upon the house by the ignorance and carelessness of his son? A foolish thing that was he had done, in putting his son in complete charge of the business, and going off himself to London, to swell about—oh yes! everybody knew his wife was an ambitious woman!—among London nobles in Parliament and Society! Suffield was a ‘very good sort;’ but he would come to grief yet, through his good-nature and his wife’s ambition!—Suffield saw these things in the looks and heard them in the tones of men, and understood only too well how they might help to bring a more untoward end about. And yet he could do nothing but wait and endure till the end came, putting his shaky trust in ‘that rascal Gorgonio.’

A diversion came at the end of the week. Telegrams were published in all the newspapers—in the Liverpool papers in large type—proclaiming that there had been a great fire on the quays of Savannah, in which some warehouses filled with cotton ready for shipment had been completely destroyed. The extent of the loss was not known, but the immediate result in Liverpool was the raising of the prices of cotton. Thereupon he wrote at once to Gorgonio: ‘Seize this favourable opportunity to sell out as much as ever you can; and then he was ashamed that he should be pleased to take advantage of a disaster which perhaps meant ruin to some.

Early next week—which was the third of the crisis—he was surprised and troubled by an anonymous letter from Liverpool. It was signed ‘One who knows,’ and it advised Mr Suffield to put no trust in Gorgonio, who was playing him false: he was working ‘both on the bull and on the bear tack;’ it was to his interest to sell little at present, and then to send down prices with a rush at the end of the month, in the endeavour to clear out. That troubled Suffield very much; for must it not have been written by some one in Gorgonio’s confidence or in Gorgonio’s office? Who else should know that Suffield had such dealings with Gorgonio? Suffield went to Liverpool to see Gorgonio, and found that part at least of the anonymous communication was true; for Gorgonio had sold comparatively little, in spite of Suffield’s urgent instruction after the news of the fire in Savannah. Then Suffield was very wroth.

‘You are not keeping faith with me, Mr

Gorgonio,’ said he. ‘I agreed to carry out my son’s compact about money, and you on that understanding agreed on your part to work off these responsibilities as quickly as possible!’

‘And, Mr Suffiel, I do work them off as quickly as possible.’

‘What, you villain!’ exclaimed Suffield. ‘And this last time, with everything in your favour, you have sold something less than ten thousand, notwithstanding my express instructions to get rid of as many as possible!’

‘What would you have, Mr Suffiel?’ cried Gorgonio, with a snarling reasonableness. ‘First you say, “Do not sell at low price!” Then you say, “Sell so many as possible!” But if I sell many as possible, I must sell at low price, because price go down under great many. Well, what? Which? I cannot please you both way! I am not two person—twice—double! I am not what you call ambidextrous! I am not amphibious! I am not hermaphroditus! No!—Try to sell both way yourself, Mr Suffiel! I am willing!’

What, then, could Suffield say or do? What could he do but fume within himself, and fret, because he was certain this man was playing him false, though he could not refute his plausible arguments? And the worst of it was—the most galling and intolerable thing!—that he must still continue tied to this man till the end of the business.

It was at that time it first became evident to Suffield that the business world in which he lived and moved was aware of his cotton entanglements. As matter of fact, the shrewd Lancashire men, whose care it was to be ‘up to’ all the moves of the complex commercial game, had for some time truly guessed what was the nature of the unworthy connection of the Suffield house with a man like Gorgonio. The disappearance, moreover, of Tanderjee—who, it was known, had had business relations with the younger Suffield—and of Daniel Trichinopoly—who had been his creature—and then of George himself, could not, and did not, fail to be remarked and interpreted. In one way and another, a tolerably accurate knowledge of the situation was common property; insomuch that, while the older and more staid men refused to believe that a man of Suffield’s commercial probity and honour would encourage so speculative and disreputable a thing as a corner, many of the younger and more light-minded—who knew not Suffield—believed he was still trying to hold the corner for his absent son, and betted on ‘the old man’s’ power to hold out.

Under these disquieting circumstances, it is not surprising that creditors of the house of Suffield—men who commonly would have never thought of pressing for payment—urged their accounts upon the attention of Mr Suffield, who bravely met their demands and wrote them cheques, till his account at the bank began to run to fewer figures than it had been wont. And still he sought assistance or advice of no one, but sat alone in his sturdy and cheery stoicism. One morning—and this was the first event that absolutely convinced him his world was in possession of his secret—‘Mr Poynting’ was announced. Mr Poynting was the head of a firm of engineers who had for many years made all the Suffield machinery, and to whom a large

bill had fallen due. Had Mr Poynting called about that bill?—The heart of Mr Suffield sank.

'Don't be frightened of me, Suffield,' said Mr Poynting. 'I'm not intruding on you as a creditor; I'm come to see you as an old friend. To come to the point at once—you'll forgive me if I'm wrong—you are, or may be soon, pressed for money. Will ten thousand pounds for a year, or a couple of years, be of any use to you? If it will be of any use, you can have it, and welcome, my friend.'

Suffield was so moved by that generous and spontaneous offer of aid that he could not speak for a moment.

'Thou'rt good, Poynting!' said he. 'Very good! I thank tha heartily, but I mun fend for mysen! Had it been a disaster o' Providence that brought me to this I mowt ha' said different, but I ha' brought it on mysen, and I mun wrastle through it by mysen; thank yo' all th' same, Poynting.'

'I ha' understood,' said Mr Poynting, 'that it was your son backed up this attempt at a corner, unbeknown to you.'

'Oh, they say that, do they?—My poor lad! There's not many to say a good word for him now, I daresay; though I reckon they were all "Hail-fellow" wi' him when he was about.—Yes; th' foolish lad thought he was going to do a great stroke. "He that maketh haste to be rich," he continued, exercising his agreeable faculty for incorrect quotation, "falleth into speculation and a snare!" Th' owd way's best! I don't hold wi' these new-fangled dodges for making money. There's no real work or wealth in them. But th' lad's away trying hard to clear off a bit of his mistake, and I'm bound to see him out of it—though it's a more serious job than I thought it would be.'

'I don't hold wi' speculation myself,' said Mr Poynting, 'and corners in anything are, I think, execrable.—But isn't it a pity, Suffield, to let all this cotton go, as they tell me it's going, at poor rates? Take the ten thousand, if it's any help to you, and hold on to the last day for a rise; and then you'll be out of it with a pound or two in your pocket.'

'Thank yo' again, Poynting; but th' cotton mun go. And I'd far rather I lost than other folk. I'll not ha' it said about me that I made a penny out of so detestable a thing as a corner! My only concern now is to save th' business; and I think I can save it—though I may ha' to go and live in a cottage again.'

'Well, Suffield,' said Poynting with resignation, 'you know th' saying: "There's nought so queer as folk." A wilful man mun ha' his way. But if you should think better o't, let me know.'

'Thank yo' again, friend,' said Suffield. 'I'll not forget; I'll remember it a' my days!' And he wrung his friend's hand as he went away.

A little later he was surprised by a visit from a bank official. The official desired to communicate a very delicate and peculiar matter of business. 'You may know or remember,' said he, 'that we were asked by Mr Suffield, junior, to trace fourteen Bank of England notes for five hundred pounds.'

'I remember,' said Suffield. 'You telegraphed to my son in London about twelve of them.'

'We have now,' said the official, 'traced another—traced it to a person in Liverpool named Gorgonio, with whom, I believe, you have dealings, Mr Suffield, and who certainly had dealings with Mr Suffield, junior, and the original holder of the note.'

'You mean Tanderjee?—I was convinced that Gorgonio was a scoundrel!'

'Precisely. Of course, that person may have received it from Tanderjee in the ordinary way of business, or he may not. It would be difficult, we think, Mr Suffield, to show that he did not; but we thought you would like to know the fact.'

Yes; Mr Suffield saw it would be difficult to show there was anything improper in Gorgonio's possession of a five hundred pound note which had passed from the hand of Tanderjee.

'I hope, Mr Suffield,' said the official, 'that this cotton business of Mr Suffield, junior, goes well now?'

'Thank you,' said Suffield; 'but it won't go well till it's gone altogether!'

A PATRIOT'S HOME AND TOMB.

GREAT HAMPDEN—or Hampden Magna, as it is officially termed, to differentiate it from the village of Little Hampden—is situated on high land among the Chiltern Hills. The place possesses at least two distinctive characteristics in addition to its connection with the patriot, John Hampden. There is neither river nor brook to be seen in the parish; and there is no assemblage of houses that can be styled a village, in the generally accepted term of the word. Instead of Great Hampden village, Hampden Row is the designation of the farmsteads and cottages, which are picturesquely scattered along the side of a somewhat large common. The undulating country around Great Hampden is finely wooded, chiefly with beech-trees, which are indigenous to the soil; but there are also many unusually large and beautiful chestnut, cedar, balm-of-Gilead, fir, and lime trees.

Before the time of the patriot, the manor of Hampden had been the property of his forefathers for several centuries. Baldwyne, the owner of the manor in the reign of Edward the Confessor, and Osbert his successor, in the reign of William the Conqueror, are stated to have been ancestors of the Hampden family. The following record is said to be copied from a vellum roll which chronicles the pedigree and alliances of the Hampdens, and bears the date of 1579: 'The manor of Hampden hath continued in the possession of one race of gentlemen by the space of more than six hundred years, who takyne their name of the place whereof they were Lorde, grew thereupon to be called by the second name of Hampden.' This triple-centuried archive also narrates that, when Osbert was Lord, William the Conqueror gave the manor to one of his followers named William Fitz-Ansculf; but Osbert, 'whether it were by monney or some other means of friendship, so purchased the good-will of the said William Fitz-Ansculf that he suffered the said Osbert to contynue in quiet possession of his

said Lordshippe of Hampden.' It is considered that the village of Hampden, written thus, H—den, is mentioned in Domesday Book. Baldwin de Hampden, the son of the above-mentioned Osbert, is recorded to have held the manor in the reign of Henry I.

The present residence of the Hampdens is believed to occupy partly the site of the ancient mansion; portions of which, discovered when the building was modernised in the middle of the last century, are said undoubtedly to have dated from the reign of King John. There is a tradition that this monarch visited Hampden House, and one of the apartments, in the north-west front, is still known as King John's Room.

Queen Elizabeth, during her many progresses through her dominions, seems to have left few country-houses of note unvisited. Hampden House is no exception to the rule. Her Majesty's sojourn there is twice commemorated. The bedstead is shown in which she slept; and an avenue called the Queen's Gap, we are told, was cut through the surrounding woods by her entertainer, Griffith Hampden, that his exalted guest might approach his abode by a new and impressive route. This glade, nearly a mile in length, leads in a direct line to the house, from which, through the vista, a beautiful view is seen of the open country beyond.

Hampden House is not wanting in distinction and dignity. It is embattled; a handsome centre and two wings compose the north-west front; and the south-west front is surmounted with a square tower. The building is, however, much spoilt by its having been covered with stucco. The interior is less imposing than the outside leads one to anticipate, the rooms being comparatively restricted in size. Two portraits of the patriot are pointed out amongst the pictures, but their originality seems doubtful. A full-length portrait of Oliver Cromwell, with a page tying his sash, appears better authenticated. The Protector, it will be remembered, was John Hampden's first-cousin, their mothers having been sisters.

Southward of the Queen's Gap, in the woods between Hampden and Missenden, is a place called Prestwood. This is stated to be the identical spot upon which the ship-money tax was levied which Hampden refused to pay, and for which he was tried—the trial in fact bringing about in the end the great civil war.

Great Hampden Church, the burial-place of the patriot, is dedicated to St Mary Magdalene. It is an ancient structure of flint and stone, disfigured, like the house, by a covering of stucco. It consists of a chancel, nave, and aisles. Authorities say that various styles of architecture prevail. They tell us that the nave arcades belong to the Decorated period; the chancel and the upper portion of the small embattled tower to the Perpendicular; whilst the lower portion of the tower is Early English. The church contains some interesting relics of medievalism. An age-worn stoup for holy-water arrests the attention in the large, stone-seated, south porch; on either side of the chancel arch there is a hagiocope; and a piscina is in a well-preserved condition. In most restored churches of pre-Reformation date we see the piscina in the chancel, and often also in the transepts, where side-chapels were once

located. The piscina is a small recess in the walls, furnished with a drain, reaching to the foundations, down which the sacred rinsings of the eucharistic chalice were poured. Hagiocopes, however, are seemingly rarer records of Roman Catholic England. It may not, therefore, even in these days of wide-spread general knowledge, be an altogether familiar fact that a hagiocope is an oblique opening in the interior walls of a church, through which the high-altar was visible to the worshippers in the side-aisles.

The last resting-places of many of the Hampden race are marked by brasses on the chancel floor, the oldest of which dates from 1496. The brass covering the grave of Griffith Hampden, the host of Queen Elizabeth, occupies a central position before the altar. Later members of the Hampden family are memorialised by mural tablets. The only noticeable one, upon the left wall of the chancel, commemorates both the illustrious patriot and his last descendant in the male line. The inscription upon the monument is as follows: 'John Hampden, XXIII hereditary Lord of Great Hampden, and Burgess for Wenden in three Parliaments. Dyed unmarried February 4, MDCCCLIX, aged 58. Having bequeathed his estate and name to his kinsman, the Hon. Robert Trevor (now Hampden), son of the Right Hon. Thomas Lord Trevor, son of the Right Hon. Sir John Trevor by Ruth, daughter of John Hampden, slain in Chalgrove Field, MDCXLIII. Robert Hampden dedicated this Monument, with all due veneration, to his Great-grandfather, and to his Benefactor's memory.'

Above the inscription there is a bas-relief carved in marble. It represents, in the foreground, the mortally wounded patriot falling from his horse; and, in the background, the church and village of Chalgrove. The Hampdens' armorial bearings are emblazoned on shields, suspended from the branches of a tree that over-spreads the scene.

It is surprising to find that this family of ancient lineage have never had a private vault for interments. However, such is the case. Apparently, the graves of the Hampden family are mostly beneath the pavement in various parts of the church; but evidently some are also in the churchyard, where 'the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.'

The register testifies that the patriot was buried—we may be sure with many tears—among his ancestors, in their parish church, June 25, 1643, the day that followed his death. The spot of his burial is not indicated. A search for his remains was organised, in July 1828, by the desire of Lord Nugent, his biographer. An account of the proceedings appeared in the newspapers of the day. The narratives stated that the investigators examined, without any satisfactory results, the initials and dates of several leaden coffins buried beneath the flooring of the church. But at length they came upon a coffin which, judging from its position, they presumed ended their task. It was considered probable that the patriot would desire to be interred near his beloved wife, and the coffin in question was lying nearly underneath the tablet that he erected to her memory, and whereupon he affectionately recorded her numerous virtues.

Notwithstanding that the coffin-plate was too

corroded and broken to allow of the inscription being deciphered, it was resolved that the lid should be cut open. It was hoped that the condition of the body would serve to throw light upon the contradictory statements regarding the manner in which the patriot was wounded, supposing that these were his remains. The gunshot wound, that ended in death after six days of intense suffering, is said to have happened in two very different ways. According to one account, John Hampden's hand was blown off by the bursting of his own pistol, which was overcharged. This weapon, it is narrated, had been given to the patriot by his son-in-law, Sir Robert Pye. Another account says that a brace of bullets shattered the patriot's shoulder. Entire evidence of the former, and partial evidence of the latter, catastrophe are averred to have been detected in the exhumed body. The hand of the right arm appeared to have been amputated, for the hand, or rather a number of small bones, was found enclosed in a separate cloth; also the left shoulder seemed displaced, though, the bones being quite perfect, there could have been no wound likely to prove fatal. The searchers concluded that this dislocation was either caused by the force of a bullet, or by the fall from his horse, after the exploded pistol had done its deadly work.

A general opinion prevailed that John Hampden's grave had been found. But the wish, we know, is often father to the thought. Anyway, it is significant that particulars of this disinterment are omitted in Lord Nugent's life of the patriot. We may therefore infer that the precise spot where Hampden sleeps his last sleep has not been indisputably discovered.

THE CAMERA-OBSCURA.

A STORY.

By J. S. FLETCHER.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

WHEN I first joined the Coastguard service, there was a great deal more romance about it than there is nowadays. A cargo of contraband stuff came in once a week then, where it does not come in once a year now. The smugglers, too, were fellows who were not afraid of giving and taking a few blows in the exercise of their trade. Many a brush have I had with them in which blood was spilt as freely as water, firearms and cutlasses being used on both sides without compunction. It was stiff work in those days; and the coastguard of to-day who walks along his mile or two of outlook and takes occasional sightings with his glass, has small conception of what wild jobs we sometimes had in the old days when a boatful of goods came in from Holland or France to be discharged in some lonely spot on the coast.

However upright and honest in other things they might be, I always found that the coast-people had not the slightest misgivings of conscience where smuggling was concerned. It seemed as natural to them to get their spirits and tobacco free of duty as it is to an ordinary man to buy them in the usual way. I have known men who

would not have defrauded their neighbours of a penny, and whose morality and honesty were beyond question, but who were beyond repentance in the matter of smuggling. The fact was they had been taught to smuggle from their very childhood, and could not see the harm of it. Again, as many of them urged, they bought the stuff over in foreign towns and paid for it—why, then, should they not be allowed to bring it to their own homes? It was useless to attempt any explanation of the law. Dwellers in solitary places know and care little about any laws but their own.

My first station was at Porthlock, a solitary fishing village on the east side of Lizard Point. The population was a typical Cornish one, and there was scarcely a soul that was not engaged in some sea-trade or in some calling connected with the staple industry. Perhaps the parson and the doctor were the only persons not actually concerned in one or other of the boats that put out of the little quay-pool, and I am not quite sure that the doctor was not as much interested in some of them as in his practice, which was not a good one, for the place was wonderfully healthy.

I had not been long at Porthlock, however, when I came to the conclusion that if fishing was the ostensible principal pursuit of the place, in reality it was nothing of the sort. True, the boats went out religiously, and there were great hauls brought to the quay-side; but something lay behind all that. The people of Porthlock, from the old mariner of a hundred years to the sturdy urchins of eight or ten, were inveterate and determined smugglers. I could make no distinction amongst them: the doctor was as bad as any of the others, and I always had an idea that the easy-going old parson was not beyond accepting an occasional gift of brandy and tobacco that had never paid duty.

It was impossible to feel angry with these people, for they performed their nefarious practices under my very nose, and smiled in my face as they did so, just like naughty children that laugh at you when they are committing some piece of perversity. They were always friendly with me, and if I had but said the word, would have found me in as much spirits and tobacco as would have supplied me for a twelvemonth. My predecessor had been somewhat lax in his duties, and I had a pretty strong suspicion that the Porthlock folk had bribed him to willing blindness whenever his eyes ought to have been extra sharp. They soon found, however, that I was not going to aid and abet them in defrauding Her Majesty's revenue. I had come there to do my duty, and meant to do it at whatever cost.

I said as much to the doctor, a red-bearded, broad-figured Scotchman, who had seen everything and been everywhere, and who was the most genial, easy-tempered man I ever knew. He never seemed to have anything to do, save when a wee Porthlockian came into the world, or some old inhabitant went out of it, fairly worn out and venerable in years. He was a mighty man at fishing and otter-hunting, and could tell the finest stories over his glass of grog and pipe of bird's-eye. Again, he was friends with everybody, treating the fishermen as brothers, and not un seldom going out with them to sea. He was also as brave as a

lion, and was always first to respond if the life-boat was summoned.

'Why, of course,' said he, 'there's smuggling going on in the place. The drap spirits ye're drinking, man, never paid duty, nor yet the baccy in yer pipe.'

'That's a nice thing to tell a preventive officer, doctor,' I answered.

'Hoot, toot, man: dinna fash yersel' on that score. What harm will the puir bodies do to the Queen by bringing a bit cargo o' stuff across the water?'

That was how they all looked at it. They could see no harm in smuggling. It was a proper adjunct to their other trade of fishing.

There was one family in the place, however, who unblushingly proclaimed the fact that they were smugglers and nothing else. True, they did not say so in plain language; but their actions were just as eloquent as any words could be. They possessed two fine boats, and went to sea; but they never brought any fish back to the quay-pool. Sometimes they stole out of the harbour at night, and were away for a day or two. When I next caught sight of them, they were pursuing their usual vocation of lounging about the quay-pool; but there was an air of satisfaction on their dark visages which could only be accounted for in one way—they had successfully run in a cargo of contraband goods.

The name of this family was Nanjulian, and there were nine males engaged in smuggling—the father, old Zebedee Nanjulian, and his eight sons. Tall, athletic, dark-visaged men they were, all well able to show more than ordinary strength at wrestling and fighting. One of their peculiarities was a devout love of Scripture names. The eldest son was called Aaron; the second, Matthew; the third, Titus; then came in order Timothy, Cleophas, Simon, Esau, and Pharaoh. The last named was the one whom I cared less about than any of his brothers. He was about twenty-five years of age, and had an expression of countenance which I did not like. Pharaoh Nanjulian, in fact, looked the sort of man to stick at nothing. I felt sure that in a fight he would kill an enemy without compunction, and I devoutly hoped that he and I might never get across each other in the course of events.

As matters turned out, this was precisely what we did do. Not more than two miles out of Porthlock, right on the edge of the cliff, there stands a gentleman's seat, the name of which I have forgotten. He was a scientific man, who had built himself an observatory, and was always taking observations and such things about the sky and sea. I have forgotten his name too. But I have not forgotten the pretty little lodge which stood at the entrance to his grounds, nor the old lodge-keeper's pretty daughter, Bertha Penruddock. Old Penruddock had been a coast-guard man himself long years before. He was very comfortably housed in the lodge, and his duties were light enough, for there were days and days together when the gates were never opened.

My lookout extended just as far as Penruddock's place, and many a cold winter night did I step inside the cheery little cottage to warm myself at the fire. Very soon I began to feel something more than a passing interest in Bertha.

She was a pretty girl and a good girl, and would make any man a true wife. When I had come to that conclusion, I used to go to the lodge oftener than ever.

But Bertha had another suitor in the field—dark-faced Pharaoh Nanjulian. He was a strange suitor, too, never striving particularly to have speech of the girl, but always hanging about the lodge, as though he fancied that she would fall in his way sooner or later. Now and then, old Penruddock had asked him what he meant by loafing around there, and received a surly answer that the cliff was free to anybody, which was true enough. Once or twice Bertha, coming home from Porthlock, was met by Pharaoh and forced to speak to him. As he always behaved himself, and was certainly no stranger to the Penruddocks, the girl could hardly tell him that she wanted none of his company. He never made any advances to her, his sole method of making love being to stare at her pretty face and utter occasional remarks about the weather.

Master Pharaoh, however, was not minded to have a rival. He had set his heart upon marrying pretty Bertha. When he found that I was visiting the lodge-keeper rather oftener than mere friendliness called for, he waylaid me, and told me his mind straight out like a man. He was coming along the cliffs when I met him, and planted himself in my path—a tall, dark-faced young giant.

'Aw—ax your pardon; but you're a-trespassin' like on my preserves, Master Walsh.'

'Trespassing on your preserves. What do you mean?'

'Aw—ax your pardon if I be wrong; but heard you was going a main deal to Penruddock's cottage. Make so bold as to tell ye what I hear.'

'You've heard right,' I said. 'But what then? How I am trespassing on your preserves because I go to Penruddock's, I don't see.'

'Aw—well, I do mean to marry Bertha Penruddock myself, iss, sure I do; and won't have no man a-courtin' of her.'

'The young lady will please herself, I suppose,' I answered, feeling rather out of temper at this summary method of warning me off. 'I shan't stop away from Penruddock's because you tell me to do so.'

'Aw—then 'twill be unpleasant for ye, Master Walsh. Ax your pardon for tellin' ye; but 'tis tarrible fuleish work to go again me.'

I said no more, but went forward and left him. That night I went to Penruddock's cottage again and told them what Pharaoh had said. Somehow or other, Bertha and I came to an understanding on that occasion, and I went homeward with ample assurance that however much Pharaoh might object, she would in due time become Mrs Edward Walsh.

Winter came on, and I soon formed a decided opinion that the Nanjulians were engaged in very extensive smuggling. From various bits of evidence that came to hand, we had no doubt whatever that valuable cargoes were being landed close to Porthlock, and so cleverly that we could not trace them. I nearly wore myself to death in keeping a lookout, and yet I came across no clue. It was a trying time, for I was on my merits, and a clever capture would have earned

for me the promotion I wanted. I grew anxious and careworn, and my peace of mind was not increased by the fact that the Nanjulians passed me with a sort of laugh-in-the-sleeve expression on their brown faces.

I came to the conclusion at last that somewhere along the neighbouring coast there was a cleverly concealed hiding-place where the smugglers were storing their goods. I would have given a year's wages to have found it. I hunted the rocks along the coast, and examined the rough ground on the headlands above, and could find nothing. Once, when I had been out all day engaged in this manner, I met several of the Nanjulians on my return, and heard them laughing in a sneering way after they had passed me. No doubt they had watched my proceedings, and were delighted to think that I was completely outwitted. But I felt sure that sooner or later the tables would be turned on old Zebedee Nanjulian and his eight sons.

One fine winter morning I found myself on the cliffs near Penruddock's cottage, and turned in there for a five minutes' chat with Bertha. The old man was out, and Bertha stood at the door with a pail of hot water and a scrubbing-brush in her hand. She had just locked the door and put the key in her pocket.

'Whither away, my girl?' I said.

'I'm going up to the Squire's latest invention, Ned,' she answered. 'He's built a thing on the Point yonder that enables you to see over the country all round. A camera-something they call it.'

'A camera-obscura,' I said. 'Ay? I should like to see that, Bertha. Is any one about?'

'The Squire's gone away for a day or two,' she answered. 'Come along, Ned. I know how to work it. You pull two or three strings, and walk round a white table—that's all. I'm going up there to scrub the floor.'

The Point, where the little wooden house for the camera-obscura had been built, was a high bit of wooded ground on the edge of a little promontory that ran out seawards, and fell sharply away to the sands. There was a good view of land and sea from it, and no better spot could have been found for the Squire's purpose. That morning was exceedingly bright and fine, and the view we had of the surrounding country was very clear. I soon learned how to manipulate the cords, and we spent a very pleasant half-hour watching the familiar objects appear on the white table. There was the town of Porthlock with its quay-pool and old-fashioned gables: then the beach and sea; then another stretch of beach and rocks; then more headland and coast; and again the lonely meadows until we came round to Porthlock once more. It was most amusing to have far-away objects brought so near home. Just as we had completed the circle, we heard old Penruddock calling Bertha's name in the grounds outside.

'He wants the key,' said Bertha; and opened the door and ran away towards the cottage. I shut the door again, and pulled the cords so that the beach beyond Porthlock was photographed on the table. It had struck me that a camera-obscura would save me many miles of walking in fine weather, for it brought all the country close to your very eyes. I pulled the reflector

round, not having any particular object in view, until a bit of coast about a mile away lay represented on the table. The scenery just there was very wild and rugged. It was known locally as the Six Sisters, because there were six obelisk-like rocks there which rose straight out of the water and the sand, four of them being below, and two a good deal above high-water mark. These rocks, with their sharp points, were very accurately represented by the camera-obscura; and I was admiring the cleverness of the invention, when I suddenly saw something which brought an exclamation of wonder to my lips.

Down the face of the cliff came five men. I recognised them at once as five of the Nanjulians. No other men in Porthlock had such tall figures or long limbs. Which five I could not say, for I could not distinguish their faces, but five Nanjulians they were. When I saw that, I slipped a catch in the door, so that no one could open it and let in the light. Then I followed the movements of the far-away group with eager eyes. It was like watching ghosts moving in a land of shadows. The five moved about aimlessly for a while, but I noticed that each wandered in a different direction. Presently they drew near each other again, and were joined by a sixth Nanjulian, who came down from the headland. Then they all went to the base of the sixth rock—the one that stood highest out of high-water mark. I could not make out what they were doing, but presently I saw them one by one disappear into the sand, as if they had been swallowed up. The sixth remained, and was busied about the base of the rock for a little while, after which he walked away along the sands in the direction of Porthlock.

I went out with a feeling of triumph. I had found the key to my puzzle: I had, by a strange chance, discovered the store-place of the Nanjulians' contraband goods. At the base of that rock there was a trap-door, covered by the sand, and affording entrance to one of those subterranean caverns where goods or men can be concealed with perfect safety. The man who remained above had done so in order to spread the sand over the trap-door again: those who had gone below were doubtless engaged in packing or arranging the fruits of their last smuggling expedition. Such was the theory I formed. I had no doubt of its being correct; it seemed to me that the time was ripe for making a splendid capture.

LINGERING AUTUMN.

THE morning mists begin to gather in the moist low-lying meadows, and linger amongst the hills and woods far into the day. The richness of colour in the forest trees, the yellowing patches in the hedgerows, and the russet-brown and gold of the ferns and bracken, show unmistakable signs that the late beauty of Autumn is with us. The amber light of the sun no longer shines on the harvest fields, for the ripened grain has been long gathered and garnered, save here and there a late crop of beans or aftermath. The drooping poppies have lost their brilliancy of colour; yarrow and hawkweeds have taken the place of scabious and toad-flax, oxeye daisies and harebells; but

the hardy pink-and-white convolvulus is still in blossom amongst the matted weeds and stubble, though the flowers are more delicate in colour; and the fragile leaflets and pinkish purple bush-vetch adds to the fading beauty of autumn.

Along the banks are bunches of white campion, their pure flowers standing fair and tall from the wild tangle of grasses and wild-oats; and growing in close proximity in the moister ditches is its sister-flower, the red campion. Sometimes that erratic wanderer, the spikenard, is found in the hedges at this season; and on the waste lands and wayside are seen marsh-mallow and yellow lady's-slipper. On sunny afternoons the humble-bees are still busy on the wild thyme and gorse bushes. Tall plants of thistles and burdock add their handsome clusters of foliage and purple heads to the scene.

The fullness of autumn is shown in the trees and hedgerows, that abound with hips and haws, sloes, blackberries, and other wild-fruit; and if there be any truth in old saws, it foretells a sharp winter; but with wild-fruits as well as cultivated sorts the cropping is more often determined by the state of the weather during the time of blossoming and setting.

There are stores of nuts and acorns, there are wild plums in abundance; and on the boughs of the old crab-trees, besides the fruit, are dainty gray-green lichens, and brownish green mosses on the gnarled old stumps. The woody night-shade climbs and clings and straggles about the hedges; and even at this late season, some lilac blossoms are on the long trails, with the bunches of berries varying in tint from green to pale yellow, orange, red, and finally deepest crimson. Not far off is its near relative, the common night-shade, whose berries are jet black.

The bearberry was once thought poisonous in England, but is now better known, and much appreciated, making an excellent conserve. It is so used in Spain and Ireland. It was first brought to this country by the monks of Mucross Abbey. The dellis and hollows under the young trees in the coppices are beginning to fill with a rich carpet of fallen leaves, though they have fallen so quietly, so gradually, we have hardly been conscious of their decay. The closing year has been a most exceptionally fine one throughout the length and breadth of the British Isles: the first months were comparatively mild, and free from sharp frost; then came the calm bright sunny spring, followed by the brilliant hot summer; and the warm welcome rains of July caused a fresh up-springing of herbage; and now the late autumn is sinking into the arms of winter with a quiet loveliness almost unprecedented. The broad harvest moon has waxed and waned in crimson splendour, succeeded by the lingering twilight and soft cool darkness of early autumn, and the wind sighs fitfully through the leaves with a gentle mournfulness.

Autumn departs, but still his mantle's fold
Rests on the groves of noble Somerville,
Beneath a shroud of russet dropped with gold;
Tweed and its tributaries mingle still;
Hoarser the wind, and deeper swells the rill;
Yet lingering notes of sylvan music swell
The deep-toned cushat and the redbreast shrill;
And yet, some tints of summer's splendour tell
When the broad sun smiles down on Ettrick's
western fell.

As October draws in, the clearer sharpness of the air, the sharply defined clouds, and the rapid shortening of the days, usually show the advance of the season; but the days are often very pleasant, and as a rule there are quite twenty fine days in this month. The few remaining members of the swallow tribe take their departure to sunnier climes, though, occasionally, stray late broods may be seen hovering over the sheltered banks of rivers and streams till the middle of November. The redwings now begin to come in flocks, and pick over the root-crops and pasture-lands in search of grubs and insects, till stress of weather sends them to happier hunting-grounds. Larks and other birds which stay the winter with us also congregate in flocks on the approach of frosty nights; and the touch of winter begins to be perceptibly felt morning and evening. The lingering late leaves will soon be down, and the noble trees, but lately standing clothed in grand masses of colour, will be stripped bare of foliage; and the sighing winds exchanged for louder, rougher tones, that eddy round the hills and woods in wild rushing blasts. The whir and rustle of birds, the crack of the gun, the scuttle and rush of dogs, and the cheery 'View halloo!' of the huntsman, all tell how swiftly the eventful year is speeding to its close. Silently it has slipped away in all its glowing splendour, its soft promise of spring, the rich fulfilment of summer, and ripeness of autumn; and soon the 'old year will lie a-dying' under the glittering eternal stars, with all its loves and hopes, its joys, ambitions, and lost opportunities, to vanish in turn in the abyss of time.

SEA-VOICES.

WHERE the broad sands lay smooth for fairy feet,
And shells of pearl shone in the dim moonlight,
The fisher-lads were courting while the bleat
Of moving flocks came through the peaceful night—
And ever like a plea
Rose the insistent murmur of the sea.

And when the fishers sailed to snare the fins
That ripple all the surface of the deep,
They went a-smiling, for 'he laughs who wins'—
Although the peewits neared in boding sweep,
And to a minor key
Was changed the boding music of the sea.

But when the storm-winds tore the gathering clouds,
And loosed their fury on the watery world,
So that the dead must gibber in their shrouds,
And into space th' unready quick be hurled—
Then ominous and free
Woke the remorseless thunder of the sea.

But when the oil of heaven had calmed the waves,
And noon was ripening over hill and lea—
Over the mourners and the ocean-graves,
Hark to the bitter sobbing of the sea!
For sorrow that must be,
The bitter, bitter grieving of the sea.

C. AMY DAWSON.

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